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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-15 ADS-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 LABE-00 SSO-00
INRE-00 AID-05 TRSE-00 ANAE-00 HA-05 DODE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0357
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LA PAZ
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part () In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 3214

DEPT FOR ARA LABOR ADVISOR; ALSO PASS AMBASSADOR CASTRO,
AIFLD AND AFL-CIO

E.O. 12065 N/A
TAGS ELAB, PINT, AR
SUBJECT COMMITTEE OF 25 LEADERS DETAINED BY POLICE

REF: BUENOS AIRES 3171

1. TWENTY LABOR LEADERS OF THE "COMMITTEE OF 25" WERE
DETAINED BY FEDERAL POLICE LAST NIGHT (APRIL 23) AFTER
BEING SUMMONED TO THE LABOR MINISTRY'S DEPARTMENT OF
LABOR RELATIONS FOR DISCUSSIONS. ACCORDING TO NEWS
ACCOUNTS, THE LABOR LEADERS, WHOSE CALL FOR A 24 HOURS
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PROTEST STRIKE ON APRIL 27 WAS WIDELY DISCUSSED BY
THE PRESS OVER LAST WEEKEND, WERE CALLED TO THE

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MINISTRY TO SIGN A QUESTIONNAIRE ESTABLISHING THEIR RESPONSIBILITY IN CALLING THE ILLEGAL STRIKE. REFUSING TO ANSWER THE QUESTIONNAIRE, THE LEADERS REQUESTED 48 HOURS TO RESPOND AND LATER ASKED FOR GUARANTEES THEY WOULD NOT BE DETAINED UPON LEAVING THE BUILDING. AUTHORITIES DEMURRED. SHORTLY AFTERWARDS, THE 18 LABOR LEADERS PRESENT AT THE MEETING -- PLUS TWO MORE WAITING OUTSIDE IN A CORNER BAR -- WERE TAKEN AWAY BY PLAIN CLOTHES POLICE IN UNMARKED CARS TO AN UNDISCLOSED LOCATION.

2. AT THE SAME TIME, THE LABOR MINISTRY RELEASED A COMMUNIQUE CLASSIFYING THE STRIKE CALL AS "IRRESPONSIBLE AND A CLEAR VIOLATION" OF JUNTA DECREE NO 9/76 BANNING LABOR ACTIVITIES. THE DECREE, REGULATED BY LAWS 21.356 AND 21.400, COULD INVOLVE SENTENCES OF UP TO SIX YEARS FOR ILLEGAL INSTIGATION OF STRIKES OR OTHER PROSCRIBED LABOR ACTIVITIES. THE MINISTRY'S COMMUNIQUE ALSO DECLARED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT "DISPOSED TO TOLERATE BEHAVIOR CONTRARY TO THE OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL REORGANIZATION PROCESS" AND WOULD ENERGETICALLY APPLY THE LAW AS DEEMED NECESSARY.

3. THE TWENTY LABOR LEADERS DETAINED ARE: ROBERTO GARCIA (TAXI DRIVERS), JORGE LUJAN (GLASS WORKERS), RAUL RAVITTI (RAILWAY WORKERS), FERNANDO DONAIRES (PAPER WORKERS), ROBERTO DIGAN (TOBACCO WORKERS), GERONIMO IZZETA (BA PROVINCE MUNICIPAL WORKERS), NATIVIDAD SANTIAGO SERPA (SANITARY WORKERS), DEMETRIO LORENZO (FOOD WORKERS), DELIMIDIO MORET
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(LIGHT AND POWER), CARLOS CABRERA (MINE WORKERS), SAUL UBALDINI (BEER WORKERS), VICTOR MARCHESSE (SHOE MAKERS), ENRIQUE MICO (DRESSMAKERS), BENJAMIN GAETANI (OIL WORKERS), JOSE RODRIGUEZ (MECHANICS), ALBERTO CAMPOS (METAL WORKERS), RAUL CRESPI (STATE PETROLEUM WORKERS), RODOLFO SOBERANO (MILLERS), FRANCISCO RACISKY (TRUCKERS), AND FELIP MASCALI (OIL WORKERS).

4. THE RIVAL NATIONAL LABOR COMMISSION ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY IT WOULD HOLD A PLENARY MEETING OF ITS 33 MEMBERS TODAY (APRIL 24) TO CONSIDER THE FRIDAY

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STRIKE CALL. THE ANNOUNCEMENT CAME BEFORE NEWS
OF THE "COMMITTEE OF 25" DETENTIONS.

5. THE PRESS ALSO QUOTED INTERIOR MINISTRY
HARGUINDEGUY AS SAYING ARGENTINA WOULD SEND A
DELEGATION TO THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION'S
MEETING IN GENEVA IN JUNE, WITH OR WITHOUT THE
PARTICIPATION OF ARGENTINE UNIONS. "WE ARGENTINES,"
HE SAIEFN ZSHOULD CONCERN OURSELVES MORE WITH WHAT
WE THINK THAN WITH WHAT THOSE OUTSIDE THINK."
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